

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3301

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2608

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, MY

SUBJECT: LABOR LEADER V. DAVID TO VISIT U.S.

1. SUMMARY. OPPOSITION POLITICIAN AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION (TWU) V. DAVID WILL VISIT THE U.S. IN MID-MAY AS PART OF A MONTH-LONG TOUR TO SOLICIT SUPPORT FOR THE TWU-INSPIRED WORKERS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (WIT). HE PLANS TO CONTACT AFL-CIO, UNITED AUTO WORKERS AND POSSIBLY TEAMSTERS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. VISITING AAFLI REP. WARY OF WIT BECAUSE OF DAVID CONNECTIONS WITH SOVIETS AND SHAKY FUNDING SO FAR, HAS TOLD DAVID HERE THAT SUPPORT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING FROM AFL-CIO UNLESS AND UNTIL WIT HAS SECURE FINANCIAL BASE. DEPT MAY WISH TO CONTACT DAVID WHILE HE IS IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

2. V. DAVID, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE TWU AND PEKEMAS POLTTICIAL, WILL SPEND THE MONTH OF MAY SEEKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM LABOR UNIONS IN THAILAND, JAPAN, U.S., CANADA, U.K., SWEDEN AND SWITZERLAND FOR THE TWU-INSPIRED WIT. HE WILL STOP IN SAN FRANCISCO AND LOS ANGELES ON MAY 13-17 AND WILL ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON ON MAY 16. IN THE U.S. DAVID WILL APPROACH THE AFL-CIO, THE UAW AND, POSSIBLLY, THE TEAMSTERS, ASKING THAT THEY CONTRIBUTE TOWARD CONSTRUCTION FUNDS FOR THE WIT.

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3. THE WIT (FORMERLY THE TRANSPORT WORKERS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY -- TWIT) IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

NEAR KUALA LUMPUR; ITS OBJECTIVE IS TO BROVIDE ADEQUATE TRAINING FACILITIES IN VARIOUS BRANCHES OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY FOR WORKERS. WHILE THE WIT WAS INITITATED BY THE TWU, THE MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS (MTUC) HAS RECETLY ADOPTED IT AS A NATIONAL PROJECT. (ACCORDING TO LOCAL SOURCES, THE MTUC HAS EMBRACED THE WIT BECAUSE DAVID, A MAN WITH NO REPUTATION FOR SCRUPLES, KNOWS WHERE MOST MTUC SKELETONS ARE HIDDEN AND HAS THREATENED TO BLACKMAIL MTUC LEADERS LIKE P.P. NARAYANAN AND SJ.H. ZAIDI. IN ANY CASE, MTUC WHICH HAS UP TO NOW SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN THE WIT, MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR ASIAN-AMERICAN FREE LABOR INSTITUTE (AAFLE) SUPPORT FOR THE INSTITUTE DURING A RECENT VISIT HERE BY AAFLE OFFICIAL ROBERT WHOLEY.)

4. DAVID HAS A LONG REPUTATION IN MALAYSIAN LABOR CIRCLES AS A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE SOVIETS. HE HAS VISITED THE USSR AND IS ONE OF THE CONTACT MEN FOR THE LIBERAL SOVIET LABOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM HERE. FOR THIS REASON, AAFLE, AS AN AFFILITATE OF THE AFL-CIO, IS LEERY OF THE WIT, AND HAS SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN SUPPORTING IT. SO FSR, DAVID SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO SOLICIT SUPPORT ONLY FROM TRADE UNIONS AND GOVERNMENTS IN NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEMS HE COULD HAVE IN OBTAINING JOINT COMMUNIST AND NON-COMMUNIST ASSISTANCE. BUT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT ONCE HE HAS OBTAINED AND SPENT AMERICAN OR OTHER WESTERN MONEY ON CONSTRUCTION OF THE WIT HE WON'T THEN TURN TO THE SOVIETS AND EASTERN EUROPEANS FOR OPERATING FUNDS, ACCORDING TO ITF REGIONAL REP DONALD UREN WHO HAS KNOWN DAVID FOR YEARS. AAFLE HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO DAVID, WHOLEY TOLD US, THAT IT WOULD ONLY CONSIDER SUPPORTING THE WIT, WITH, FOR EXAMPLE, A TANGIBLE PROJECT LIKE DORMITORIES, AFTER THE INSTITUTE HAS SUFFICIENT CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATING CAPITAL TO BE AN ON-GOING CONCERN.

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